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VISITORS TO POLAND REPORT PEOPLE OPPOSED TO RED RULE

Berne -- After spending several weeks in Poland, two non-Poles, who have a perfect knowledge of the Polish language, returned to Berne in the early part of December 1949. One of the men made three trips into Poland within a period of 2 years; the other visited Poland for the first time. They gave a detailed account of their experiences; excerpts are given below:

Privately owned stores are becoming a rarity. In their place, state merchandise stores and cooperative stores are increasing rapidly and are taking over the trade. In the last 2 months, meat and fats could be obtained only at the cooperatives. A family is allotted one pound of meat per week. No one knows what becomes of the meat supply; however, the common gossip is that it is exported to the USSR and is stockpiled. Lines in front of stores handling meat and fats form as early as 0300 hours. However, there is plenty of other food and there is no talk of hunger. The food situation is somewhat better on the farms, since after the fulfillment of the hog contracts, the farmer has the right to slaughter one hog for his own use. Agricultural production in Poland is abundant and there would be sufficient food if it were not forcibly exported to the USSR.

Political meetings are innumerable. Party meetings often last from a few hours to late at night. A certain number of meetings must be held and reports must be submitted on the agenda and discussions. In one area 65 meetings were scheduled for a certain period and only 28 were held. It was reported that 65 meetings were held, with the agenda, discussions, etc., all falsified. Naturally, after the disclosure of such incidents, sabotage trials follow.

A person can be frank in the company of his immediate family, but not in the company of acquaintances. People are silent on streetcars and trains, and there is mutual suspicion, heretofore unknown in Poland. In smaller cities, night life has almost entirely disappeared. Arrests are very common. Even more common are police hearings held to intimidate the people.

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The people do not believe in the USSR's might nor any other official propaganda. They believe that the USA has the economic strength to crush any aggressor.

The regime now is going through an important crisis because it lacks trustworthy people for responsible positions. The regime must use inexperienced Communists easily prone to deviation. There are constant purges and there would be even more if others were available to fill positions.

The USSR is not even sure of the Security Police. Important charges were made in the army, which up to Rokossovskiy's appointment, was very ratriotic and not susceptible to Communist propaganda. All armaments of the Polish Army come from the USSR. The army does little training; instead, it is undergoing intensive political indoctrination.

After a period of opportunism and self-deception, the people began to understand Communist goals and revived their moral stamina. The people are strongly united and the Catholic Church played a huge role in this. Never before has such a strong impetus been observed toward the Church and Catholic morality. The Tygodnik Powszechny, published in Krakov by the Archbishop's curia, is considered as the true spiritual leader in all matters. Unfortunately, it is limited since state censorship does not permit it to write fully about many things. There can be no understanding between the regime and the church as long as Communism insists that the church renounce its mission.

All who have the opportunity listen to foreign broadcasts in spite of penelties. Smuggled foreign publications are passed from hand to hand in great secrecy. Also, gratitude to foreign countries is noted for their publication of the truth about Poland. The Polish pecple want the world to know, in spite of outward appearances, that Poland has not lost its spiritual connection with western Christian civilization.

The school-age youth organization "Service for Poland," has not produced the desired results. On the whole, the youth strongly opposes Communism. At the opening of the present academic year, the youth listened to addresses by Party members, Security Police, and army personnel with indifference and boredom. Marxism made greater progress among the college youths where approximately 10 percent of the students accepted Communism of their own free will.

In October 1949, at a teachers' convention in Nowy Saca, Minister Skrzeszewski severely criticized teachers for the students' poor knowledge of Marxism. It was disclosed that when reading Communist propaganda reports dictated in Warsaw, the teachers frequently announced that they were not the authors of the reports and that they were reading them only because it was their duty to do so.

During the last 2 years, trips were arranged for Polish farmers into the USSR to propagandize the collective farm system. Last September, some farmers from Rzeszow Powiat made the trip. Upon their return, the powiat did not only pass a resolution to establish the first collective, but also passed a resolution not to establish any collectives. The farmers who were on the trip said that the village people in the USSR live practically in slavery and in the worst poverty. Many times, the farmers had been asked secretly when the West would come and free the Soviet people. Since then the trips have been discontinued, and the Polish-USSR border is guarded more closely than ever before.

There is much discontent among agricultural workers in Poland. All are exhausted from the quota system. Health conditions in villages are constantly getting worse. Most of the people in Poland are very poorly dressed.

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The state construction enterprises in Poland try to employ as many women as possible on construction of buildings, roads, and bridges. Vocational training schools were opened to train women for heavy manual work. Living conditions are so bad that Polish women are willing to accept almost any type of work. At the first course, 201 women were trained: 41 as masons, 18 as plasterers, 73 as elevator operators, 28 as glaziers, and many as interior house painters.

The attitude toward emigrees has changed markedly. The country looks upon emigrees as a solid bloc and condemns intraemigree disputes, believing that only unity can bring Poland any benefit. The Polish public as a whole is not divided into parties at present; it is just Catholic and patriotic. Liberation is the single goal; there will be time enough for party divisions. The people also know that future Poland will have to consider "socialization."

The mainstay today is the Catholic Church, which endured Hitler's concentration camps and will endure Communist murders and imprisonments.

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